

political entity on May 5, 1881.

Henderson, the county seat, was founded by the prominent family of William Reavis in 1811 with the construction of a store and residence. In 1840, the Raleigh and Gaston Railroad established a depot in Henderson. This railroad materially spurred the growth of the town, which was incorporated in 1841. Being practically the "First Family," the Reavis clan suggested that the town be named Henderson in honor of their family friend Judge Leonard Henderson, Chief Justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court. Henderson rapidly became a shipping point for both cotton and tobacco commodities which still play an important role in the economy of the area. Retail trade flourished and the community continued to grow in size and importance. Other communities, Middleburg, Kittrell, and Townsville, which had an agricultural based economy flourished for a period of time but lost much of their importance after the reconstruction period. The Town of Kittrell was once famous as a resort and spa.

The rise of industry in Vance County was aided by the establishment of textile industries beginning in 1895. Other industries of major importance which have located in Vance County during the twentieth century include a bagging company, glass company, chemical, hosiery, knitting, and milling companies, to mention only a few.

The construction of Kerr Lake in recent years considerably changed the features of large areas of Vance County and offers much in the way of recreation, tourist potential, and the development of cheap and plentiful hydroelectric power.

SOURCE: Peace, "Zeb's Black Baby," Vance County, North Carolina